



# Crafting your story and finding the arc

This worksheet is part of the **Survivor Storytelling Workbook**. The full workbook is available at the [NSN website's resource library](#).

To effectively craft your story and find the arc and an impactful conclusion that ties everything together, you must first consider your audience.

Who is your audience?

Approximate age of your audience?

Are there likely to be survivors in the audience?

Are they here for work or other professional obligations? (e.g. lawyer training, healthcare conference, or social work continuing education) Or is it a non-work event?

Based on what you know about the audience's demographics, what are some reasons you think they would want to hear your story? What information do you think they hope to learn, or could help them better understand violence and abuse in their own lives or careers?

What do you hope the audience will take away from the story you want to tell them? What impact do you hope your story will make, and what do you hope it will teach or illustrate?

How much time do you have to tell your story, and do you need to leave time for questions at the end?

What do you want the overall message of your story and takeaway to be?

What is the transformation in your story? (There can be more than one)

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

***Example:***

*From captivity to freedom.*

*From fear and resistance to acceptance.*

*From desperation to hope.*

*From feeling like a failure to being gentler with myself.*

*From anger and hopelessness to feeling powerful.*

*From thinking my power comes from others' accolades to knowing that my power comes from my willingness to acknowledge vulnerability in safe-enough spaces.*

*\*Note: For many survivors, a linear redemption arc may feel confining, performative, or like it feeds too neatly into a "rescue" or "savior" narrative. Reflect on your reasons for sharing your story, and remember that a story in which you stay and are still sometimes messy can be freeing and can disrupt the ways in which outsiders twist and misuse our stories.*

Recommended citation: Sabra Boyd and Chris Ash. *Survivor Storytelling Workbook for advocates with lived experience working in the many movements to end violence*. National Survivor Network - Cast (2023).

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**What are some scenes that help illustrate a specific point you want to highlight with your story?**

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Anecdote(s) that could illustrate this point</b>
<i>Example: Attorneys and Judges</i>	<i>Therapy is a necessary resource</i>	<i>Story about how difficult it was to testify and fear of violent retaliation, but that it was possible because of a therapist you could check in with during the trial.</i>